12: Murphy E-5 (1952-1953) 1960
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culture, the planting and use of cotton were introduced after their contact with the whites, and their only watercraft were bark canoes of the type the German ethnologist Karl von den Steinen saw in the upper Xingú.[4] The moiety-phratry-clan system of Mundurucú social organization is considerably more complex than most Tupian societies, and the system of kinship nomenclature is correspondingly divergent. Mundurucú religion follows the broad outlines of supernatural beliefs and rites of the area, but there are significant differences in mythology.

These are only a few points of dissimilarity between the Mundurucú and the other Tupian tribes of the coast and lower Amazon region, but when considered with the linguistic data, they are sufficient to suggest a considerable period of independent development. There are also fundamental points of similarity: subsistence techniques are much akin to those found throughout the tropical-forest region of South America, and the Mundurucú are a village-dwelling people. And in common with other tribes of the area, class stratification is absent, political controls are simple, and the fundamental organization of the society is established along lines of kinship.

Certain characteristics lead me to suspect that the Mundurucú may have originally dwelled south of their present habitat. Their lack of cotton and the dug-out canoe and the absence of cannibalism and alcoholic beverages suggest that they may have come from the Planalto de Mato Grosso. Also, although they were and are industrious horticulturalists, their supernatural beliefs and ceremonies are only marginally concerned with cultivation; their major emphasis in ritual is on hunting. One other factor suggests a more southerly origin. The traditional Mundurucú villages were situated in the northernmost savannah coun-

[4] Steinen, 1894, pp. 222-223.

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476 the women of her household. Occasionally, two or more
591 men of the same household will plan a garden jointly, al-
621 though this is not normal procedure. In hunting, the man may join in a communal chase with all other men or with only a few of his choice, who may be from any household. In short, the bridegroom is expected to show respect, def-
[606] erence, and a degree of obedience to his father-in-law, but there are few occasions on which the men of the house act as a unit under central direction. This extends even to the construction of the house, for each dwelling of a new village is erected by the collective labor of all residents.

The men are by no means completely disassociated from
591 the dwellings of their wives. The husbands frequently re-
593 lax there, visit their children, or take a snack of food. And,
621 as has been noted, the passage of years usually sees a consolidation of ties between man and wife and, concomitantly, with her household; it also sees the growth of the husband's prestige within the extended family unit. But most of the male's time is passed in the men's house, and the locus of his political and economic activity remains in its framework and not in that of the household. The relationship between men's house and dwelling will become clearer when the organization of the latter is discussed.

345 In the eksá lineal affiliations are recognized in the sleep-
513 ing arrangements. On each side of the men's house and
• 61 down its middle are horizontal poles, running the full length of the house five feet above the ground. These supports form the stays from which two rows of hammocks are hung. The men of the Red moiety always sleep in the south row, those of the White in the north. Individual clans have no fixed place in each row, for clan composition in each village is too variable. The oldest men always hang their hammocks in the rear of the shelter, where they gain

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greatest protection from the weather. Other men, first of the same clan and then of the same phratry, hang their hammocks adjacent to these older men, but the boys and adolescents are expected to sleep in the less favored forward part of the eksá whatever their lineal affiliations. This is less a violation of clan unity than an affirmation of the prestige accorded to age in Mundurucú society.

The men's house is the single most important institution in the structuring of male activity. It serves as an informal forum in which plans are discussed and decisions made, and each man interacts with every other man to a greater extent within its precincts than if the village were organized strictly along extended family lines. The men generally take their first meal of the day in the men's house, shortly after dawn, and set out from there in groups for the day's hunt. On their return to the village, they leave their kill with their wives and then go to bathe. They return from the stream to the men's house and there relax in their hammocks until all have returned and the evening repast is ready. Some pass their time while waiting in making baskets, bows, arrows, and other items. When the food is cooked, a younger member of each household goes to the house to bring its contribution to the communal meal. A loud shout goes up to call in the stragglers, and all gather about the pots. The oldest help themselves first, and second choice is given to the boys. After the evening meal, the occupants of the eksá lie in their hammocks and converse; most fall asleep soon after night falls.

The emphasis on coöperation between the men transcends the practical necessities of Mundurucú ecological adaptation, and it is looked upon as good and valued behavior in itself. No man refuses an invitation to take part in garden breaking, for, not only will he one day expect reciprocity, but to refuse would be to disassociate himself

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177 amount, and the native social structure was directly af-
182 fected.

That Mundurucú society was not isolated and was not
121 stable, were advantages to a functional analysis rather
182 than disturbing factors. Through observation of change in a component part of a system, it was possible to examine and determine with some degree of verifiability the ramifications and strength of relationship between the changing part and other parts. Functional links of interdependency did indeed exist, and change had repercussions through at least part of the system. As A. R. Radcliffe-Brown phrased it: "It is a corollary of the hypothesis of the systemic connection of features of social life that changes in some features are likely to produce changes in other features."[1] Thus, the functionalist method, when used in the dimension of history, has led to the study of social causality. It further illustrated that the direction of change was profoundly influenced by the structure of Mundurucú society; in this way the social system acted as a field of plural determinants, and social change derived therefrom its order and regularity.

174 At the time when the tribe erupted so violently into his-
182 tory the Mundurucú were patrilineal and patrilocal and
61 appear to have been undergoing expansion in population and territory. Their social structure was well adapted to such growth, because the equivalence of kin and territorial unit permitted a segmentation process whereby small kin-local groups split off from larger ones. The offspring units, composed of residential nuclei of patrilineally related males and their wives, were miniatures of the parent groups, and they maintained a relation with the parent units through the over-all structure of lineage, subclan,

[1] Radcliffe-Brown, 1952, p. 7.

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clan, phratry, and moiety. In this way, the social system accommodated increased numbers through fission and the multiplication of similar component units.

Marriage in our earliest known condition of Munduruc society was regulated by the exogamous moieties. Preferential forms of marriage were with the cross-cousin or the sister's daughter. Agnatic groups relinquished rights to the offspring of their women and to the women themselves after imposition of bride service upon the groom. The groom, during this temporarily matrilocal period, was not integrated in the wife's lineage and household but remained an outsider who slept in the men's house with the village bachelors.

The establishment of peaceful relations with the whites and the growth of trade with them in horticultural commodities, it has been hypothesized, set in motion a far-reaching series of modifications in Munduruc social structure. The Munduruc were horticulturalists before their contact with the whites, and trade in manioc flour and other produce did not constitute a technological innovation, as such. It did, however, place a greater premium on female labor, especially the cooperative and organized work that goes into farinha manufacture. In terms of the operation of the system of production, it became more crucial that the female work group have continuity and retain those members that it had trained. This was accomplished through matrilocality, which not only insured this continuity but provided a productive unit bonded by the solidary ties of demonstrable consanguinity.

One might say at this point that increased horticulture "caused" matrilocality. Or one might phrase the same proposition to read that "the function of matrilocality was to provide a fully cooperative and integrated work group in farinha production." Anthropologists would tend to say

each other. Though I was an outsider, I had at the time been several months with the tribe and this departure from what I expected of a tribesman upset me considerably. Bibel turned out to be a great problem in other ways. He cited his own importance as a justification for the demands that he made on me for gifts. And he bragged continually of his ability to deal with whites, to lead his followers, to hunt, or to do almost anything in either the realm of traditional Mundurucu activity or in their relationships with the outside world. He strove desperately and openly towards the acquisition of prestige and of material goods, which he had accepted as indicators of prestige. For this reason our exquisite boots were admired greatly, as this would surely differentiate him from his barefoot Indian fellows--shortly after one of his visits, my wife discovered that her boots were missing. And we met no other Mundurucu so brash. They felt free to enter our house at all times, but only Bibel would demand a cup of coffee and then lie in our hammocks; he was quite offended when we pointed out to him that his body paint was staining them. Bibel had other most unusual characteristics. He spoke freely and critically of other men to us and did this even in the presence of third parties. Nor did he bother to conceal his hostility and contempt when someone inimical to him was near. But underneath this façade, Bibel was a frightened and anxious man. He would often confide to me darkly that "people are talking about me." Lest this be interpreted as paranoia in the clinical sense, I should stress that people were indeed talking about him, and Bibel had every reason to be anxious. Not only his ego but his very life was in danger.

III

Bibel's behavior grated against almost every single point of Mundurucu expectations regarding how a chief should act and how men, in general, should behave. Mundurucu society is intensely egalitarian and based upon the principle of maintenance of solidarity among a group of males who are considered to be peers. It has a peculiar structure in that it is divided into patrilineal moieties, which in turn are differentiated into a number of patrilineal clans. But the normal mode of residence is matrilocal, and men generally move to the villages of their wives. This disperses the clans throughout all the villages, for a young man, when he marries, leaves the father from whom he obtains clan membership. It also produces a dualism of loyalties in which the man maintains a clan identity and, with it, defined role obligations and also acquires membership and roles in the village of his wife. This produces a classic form of organic solidarity, for the society is bound together by cross-cutting segments. But it is a very simple form of organic solidarity and an extremely brittle one. Social cohesion must be vigorously maintained and individual strivings muted, for alliances in cases of conflict cannot range along simple segmental lines. To support a fellow-clansman in a crisis may pit a person against his village mates and vice versa. In a society with a population of only 1,800, living in communities of 60 to 100 persons, such stresses are serious threats to social stability in any event; in one of the Mundurucu type they may be totally disruptive. The social system not only produces solidarity but requires it for maintenance.[7] Given the structure of Mundurucu society, the effective social actor was one who was cooperative, unaggressive, normal, quiet, and willing to place the will of the collectivity before his own. It may be immediately perceived that Bibel presented a threat to propriety and to the social system. He was belligerent, loud, self-centered and exploitive--all the things that a Mundurucu should not be.